

## HTML static code analysis: Table cells should reference their headers

2-3 minutes

If a `<td>` cell has a `headers` attribute, it should reference only IDs of headers in the same column and row.

Note that it is usually better to use `scope` attributes of `<th>` headers instead of `headers` attribute. `headers` attribute requires you to list every corresponding `<th>` header's id, which is error-prone and makes the code less maintainable. See [W3C WAI Web Accessibility Tutorials](#) for more information.

If your table is too complex, it might be better to split it into multiple small tables as it improves both readability and maintainability.

This rule raises an issue when the `headers` attribute of a `<td>` cell contains IDs which don't belong to a header in the same row or column.

### Noncompliant Code Example

```
<table border="1">
  <caption>
    Rental price
  </caption>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <td></td>
      <th id="small" scope="col">
        Small car
      </th>
      <th id="big" scope="col">
        Big Car
      </th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <tr>
      <th id="paris" class="span" colspan="3" scope="colgroup">
        Paris
      </th>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <th headers="paris" id="day1">
        1 day
      </th>
      <td headers="paris day1 big"> <!-- Noncompliant, referencing
the column "big" instead of "small" -->
        11 euros
      </td>
      <td headers="berlin day1 big"> <!-- Noncompliant, there is no
header with id "berlin" -->
        50 euros
      </td>
    </tr>
  </tbody>
</table>
```

### Exceptions

No issue will be raised if the `headers` attribute contains the following characters: `{ } ( ) [ ] $`. This avoids false positives on variables coming from Javascript frameworks such as Angular.

### See

- [WCAG2, 1.3.1](#) - Info and Relationships
- [WCAG2, H43](#) - Using id and headers attributes to associate data cells with header cells in data tables

